

// A special meeting of the Council of the City of Lynchburg, recessed from October 25, was held on the 8th day of November, 2005, at 4:00 P.M., Second Floor Training Room, City Hall, Carl B. Hutcherson, Jr., President, presiding. The purpose of the meeting was to conduct a work session regarding the Tourism Program. The following Members were present:

Present: Dodson, Gillette, Helgeson, Hutcherson 4

Absent: Foster, Johnson, Seiffert 3

// Vice Mayor Foster arrived at 4:18 p.m.

// Council Member Johnson arrived at 5:05 p.m.

// City Manager Kimball Payne stated that since City Council's October 25 meeting, he has had a series of meetings with stakeholders in the tourism program and that there seems to be some consensus that the ideal structure for a tourism program would be an independent, regional entity such as an authority. Mr. Payne went on to say that moving to an independent, regional entity would require community discussion and considerable effort and time and that in order to provide a framework for that to happen, he would like to offer the following proposed concept:

- (a) Renew the contract with the Chamber of Commerce for a two year period, with an optional additional one year period for a transition to a new program structure once such a structure is agreed upon.
- (b) Fundamentally restructure the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) to establish qualifications for membership, grant authority over budget development and implementation, provide authority for program design and operation, and define other expectations. TAC membership would include representatives from all stakeholder groups as well as the City's Director of Economic Development and the Director of Communications and Marketing.
- (c) Put procedures in place to ensure full accountability and transparency of the tourism program budget and its relation to the overall Chamber budget.
- (d) Establish program performance measures.
- (e) Simplify the funding formula to a straight percentage of lodging tax revenue with any additional funds over the current year to be dedicated to marketing.
- (f) Create an oversight committee consisting of the Mayor or Vice-Mayor, the City Manager, the Chair of the Chamber Board of Directors, and the President of the Chamber to address high level policy and personnel issues related to the program.

Mr. Payne explained that TAC and the entire community would work over the two year period to define the long term goals and expectations of the tourism program, work toward the establishment of an independent, regional authority with input from all stakeholders, and explore the establishment of an additional regional visitors' center in the Rt. 460/29 corridor between Tyreeanna and the Lynchburg Regional Airport. Mr. Payne stated that he shared the proposed concept with both the Hotel/Motel Association and the Chamber of Commerce and that they have accepted the concept although there remain a number of details to be worked out and that the next step would be to create a contract

document to incorporate the above proposal. Mr. Payne also commented that at some point in the future a marketing expert may need to be brought in to define our market area. Mr. Payne then outlined a number of concerns regarding placing the tourism program under City Administration, especially at a time when he is trying to reduce the size of City staff, and Council Members reached consensus to support Mr. Payne's request not to place the tourism program under City Administration. Mr. Dave Francis, representing the Hotel/Motel Association, stated that although moving forward with the establishment of an independent authority to operate the tourism program would work, the group also believe that it is still feasible for the tourism program to be run by the Economic Development Department and housed at the Visitor's Center. Mr. John Doyle, Chair of the Lynchburg Regional Chamber of Commerce Board, stated that the Chamber would be happy to work with the City to incorporate the changes outlined by City Manager Payne. Council Members discussed the various aspects of the City Manager's proposal and agreed that the next step would be for the City Manager to draft a contract document to incorporate the above concept to share with stakeholders, reach consensus on and bring back to City Council for further discussion and approval. Council also asked that the contract with the Chamber of Commerce be for a two year period and that they be provided a timeline of events that would happen over this two year period of time. In response to Council questioning, City Manager Payne stated that he would work towards scheduling this item for the December 13 work session.

// The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

---

Clerk of Council